

***Amendments to the Claims***

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

Claims 1-19 (Canceled).

20. (Currently Amended) An axle driving system, comprising:

a housing;

a hydrostatic transmission disposed in said housing including an input means, a hydraulic pump driven by said input means, a hydraulic motor driven by pressurized oil from said hydraulic pump, an output means driven by said hydraulic motor, and a center section on which said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor are mounted and are fluidly connected with each other;

an axle; and

a driving gear train disposed in said housing for drivingly connecting said output means of said hydrostatic transmission and said axle;

wherein said center section is separably mounted in said housing, said center section has separate first and second portions so that [[a]] said first portion is provided adjacent to said axle and [[a]] said second portion is provided away from said axle, a pump mounting surface for mounting said hydraulic pump is provided on said first portion, and a motor mounting surface for mounting said hydraulic motor is provided on said second portion,

wherein said pump mounting surface and said motor mounting surface are perpendicular to each other, the rotational axis of said hydraulic pump disposed on said pump mounting surface is substantially vertical, the rotational axis of said hydraulic

motor disposed on said motor mounting surface is substantially horizontal, and said first portion and said second portion of said center section are coupled to each other so that a phantom plane including said motor mounting surface intersects with the input means of said hydraulic pump disposed on said pump mounting surface.

21. (Canceled).

22. (Canceled).

23. (Currently Amended) [[An]] The axle driving system according to ~~claim 21~~ claim 20, wherein said center section further comprises:

a pair of first kidney-shaped ports open on said pump mounting surface for receiving oil supplied into or discharged ~~into or~~ from said hydraulic pump;

a pair of second kidney-shaped ports open on said motor mounting surface for receiving oil supplied into or discharged ~~into or~~ from said hydraulic motor; and

a pair of oil passages provided in said center section for fluidly connecting said first kidney-shaped ports and said second kidney-shaped ports;

wherein said oil passages are positioned horizontally ~~vertically~~ in a thick portion of said center section.

Claims 24-35 (Canceled).

36. (New) An axle driving system, comprising:

a housing;

a hydrostatic transmission disposed in said housing including an input means, a hydraulic pump driven by said input means, a hydraulic motor driven by pressurized oil from said hydraulic pump, an output means driven by said hydraulic motor, and a center section on which said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor are mounted and are fluidly connected with each other;

an axle; and

a driving gear train disposed in said housing for drivingly connecting said output means of said hydrostatic transmission and said axle;

wherein said center section is separably mounted in said housing, said center section is integrally formed with first and second portions so that said first portion is provided adjacent to said axle and said second portion is provided away from said axle, a pump mounting surface for mounting said hydraulic pump is provided on said first portion, and a motor mounting surface for mounting said hydraulic motor is provided on said second portion,

wherein said pump mounting surface and said motor mounting surface are perpendicular to each other, the rotational axis of said hydraulic pump disposed on said pump mounting surface is substantially vertical, the rotational axis of said hydraulic motor disposed on said motor mounting surface is substantially horizontal, and a phantom plane including said motor mounting surface intersects the input means of said hydraulic pump disposed on said pump mounting surface.

37. (New) The axle driving system according to claim 36, wherein said center section further comprises:

a pair of first kidney-shaped ports open on said pump mounting surface for receiving oil supplied into or discharged from said hydraulic pump;

a pair of second kidney-shaped ports open on said motor mounting surface for receiving oil supplied into or discharged from said hydraulic motor; and

a pair of oil passages provided in said center section for fluidly connecting said first kidney-shaped ports and said second kidney-shaped ports;

wherein said oil passages are positioned horizontally in a thick portion of said center section.

38. (New) An axle driving system, comprising:

a hydrostatic transmission including an input means, a hydraulic pump driven by said input means, a hydraulic motor driven by pressurized oil from said hydraulic pump, an output means driven by said hydraulic motor, and a center section on which said hydraulic pump and said hydraulic motor are mounted and are fluidly connected with each other;

an axle; and

a driving gear train for drivingly connecting said output means of said hydrostatic transmission and said axle;

wherein said center section has first and second portions so that said first portion is provided adjacent to said axle and said second portion is provided away from said axle, a pump mounting surface for mounting said hydraulic pump is provided on said first portion, and a motor mounting surface for mounting said hydraulic motor is provided on said second portion,

wherein said pump mounting surface and said motor mounting surface are perpendicular to each other, the rotational axis of said hydraulic pump disposed on said pump mounting surface is substantially vertical, the rotational axis of said hydraulic motor disposed on said motor mounting surface is substantially horizontal, and said first

and second portions of said center section are coupled to each other so that a phantom plane including said motor mounting surface intersects said input means of said hydraulic pump disposed on said pump mounting surface.

39. (New) The axle driving system according to claim 38, wherein said center section further comprises:

a pair of first kidney-shaped ports open on said pump mounting surface for receiving oil supplied into or discharged from said hydraulic pump;

a pair of second kidney-shaped ports open on said motor mounting surface for receiving oil supplied into or discharged from said hydraulic motor; and

a pair of oil passages provided in said center section for fluidly connecting said first kidney-shaped ports and said second kidney-shaped ports;

wherein said oil passages are positioned horizontally in a thick portion of said center section.

40. (New) The axle driving system according to claim 39, further comprising:

a housing including two parts separably joined to each other through a joint surface, wherein said hydrostatic transmission is disposed in said housing so that the pump mounting surface on said first portion of said center sections is disposed parallel to said joint surface; and

a motor shaft of said hydraulic motor having opposite first and second ends, wherein said first end is supported by said second portion of said center section, and wherein said second end is supported by said two parts of said housing.

41. (New) The axle driving system according to claim 40, wherein said drive gear train and said axle are disposed in said housing.